DESIGN

Vol XXXII, No. 6 NOVEMBER, 1930

■ That an art renassaiance of unique vitality and importance is taking place in Mexico is not exactly new to those Americans who are sincerely interested in decorative arts, but the real scope and fact that this surging movement is one of art in every day life rather than art for art's sake must be emphasized to our students and designers. We have spoken much and glibly in our schools during the past concerning the place of art in the home, in the community, in dress, and in all phases of daily life. We have on occasions in the class room touched lightly upon such problems as proper use of materials, mediums, and decorations. Lectures have been given on creative imagination in art and various tendencies regarding the expression of national characteristics and other qualities; all with rather questionable results.

The more advanced students and enthusiastic amateurs have for generations invariably turned to Europe for light and inspiration in designing real things for us of the United States. The results, as we all know, have repeatedly been something of a transplanting, or worse still copying, Italian, French, English, German, or almost any continental style. These seemed to have been cramped into our homes and modes of living which, needless to say, are quite different from those countries. During all this time right at our doorstep has been fomenting and achieving phenomenal import, generally unknown to us in the United States, this Mexican Art which is conspicuous for its scope permeating all walks of life from the lowly Indian who eats from exquisitely beautiful dishes and wears most harmoniously colorful clothes to the eleganté and grandee whose life is saturated with this wealth of decorative arts. All the while the outstanding quality of the art of this exciting country is that "Art for art's sake" is unknown. Art is placed intimately with all activities of life as may be learned from the following pages.

It is true that Mexico has been subjected to varied outside influences but contrary to the conditions which exist in other countries, one influence here has not killed off another. All has been assimilated as component parts into the present vital and almost over-powering expression. All contributions from the outside to Mexico have simply been food to feed the various roots extending in all directions, as they do, and produce this vastly significant growth whose fruits are now causing the Art World to pause and study. Some of these roots reaching back to the art of the cultured Mayas at the time of Christ contribute a line quality and poise noticeable still in Mexican Art; others go back to the Aztec civilization of the Seventh Century whose gylphs have left their characteristics. Of course, the Spanish Inquisition in the Sixteenth Century with the romantic *conquistadores* quickly introduced into the country a rich flare for color and decoration, indirectly bringing the rhythmic quality of Moorish design which the aesthetic souls of the Indians immediately absorbed. This was not enough for throughout Mexican Art are noticeable strangely Chinese motifs, particularly in ceramics and lacquer work such as are illustrated on page 127.

All of these influences from the first to the last, not to mention the French which has been felt in comparatively recent times, have grown, intermingled and knitted together into a tremendously powerful background from which grows the arts of today in the home life — clothes, toys, utensils, resplendent with color — public buildings, beautifully decorated with murals; in fact all walks of life in Mexico. And by no means should we fail to consider such forces as the syndicate of painters and sculptors and such leaders as Rivera, Orozco, Revueltas, Charlot; and those younger men, Covarubias and Pacheco. All of these are but some expressions of this vast field which we wish to introduce to our readers.

■ A leading personality in awakening the aesthetic sense of Americans to the decorative arts of Mexico is Mrs. Frances Flynn Paine. To her goes the credit of achieving the first comprehensive exhibition of this rich art to travel throughout the United States. It was by means of this, as well as her enthusiasm, untiring effort and knowledge— for she had lived in various parts of Mexico as a child — that the support of the General Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation was given in order that this excellent project might be pursued further. The result is the Paine Mexican Arts of New York City, an organization which not only conducts a permanent exhibition vibrant and exciting in its significance, but keeps interested Americans atuned to the line, form, and color of this vast source of design. Contacts are made between Americans here and the Mexican creators and a channel of circulation is kept open for the genius of these thoroughly artistic, though less commercial neighbors.

Mrs. Frances Flynn Paine wearing a native embroidered Mexican costume

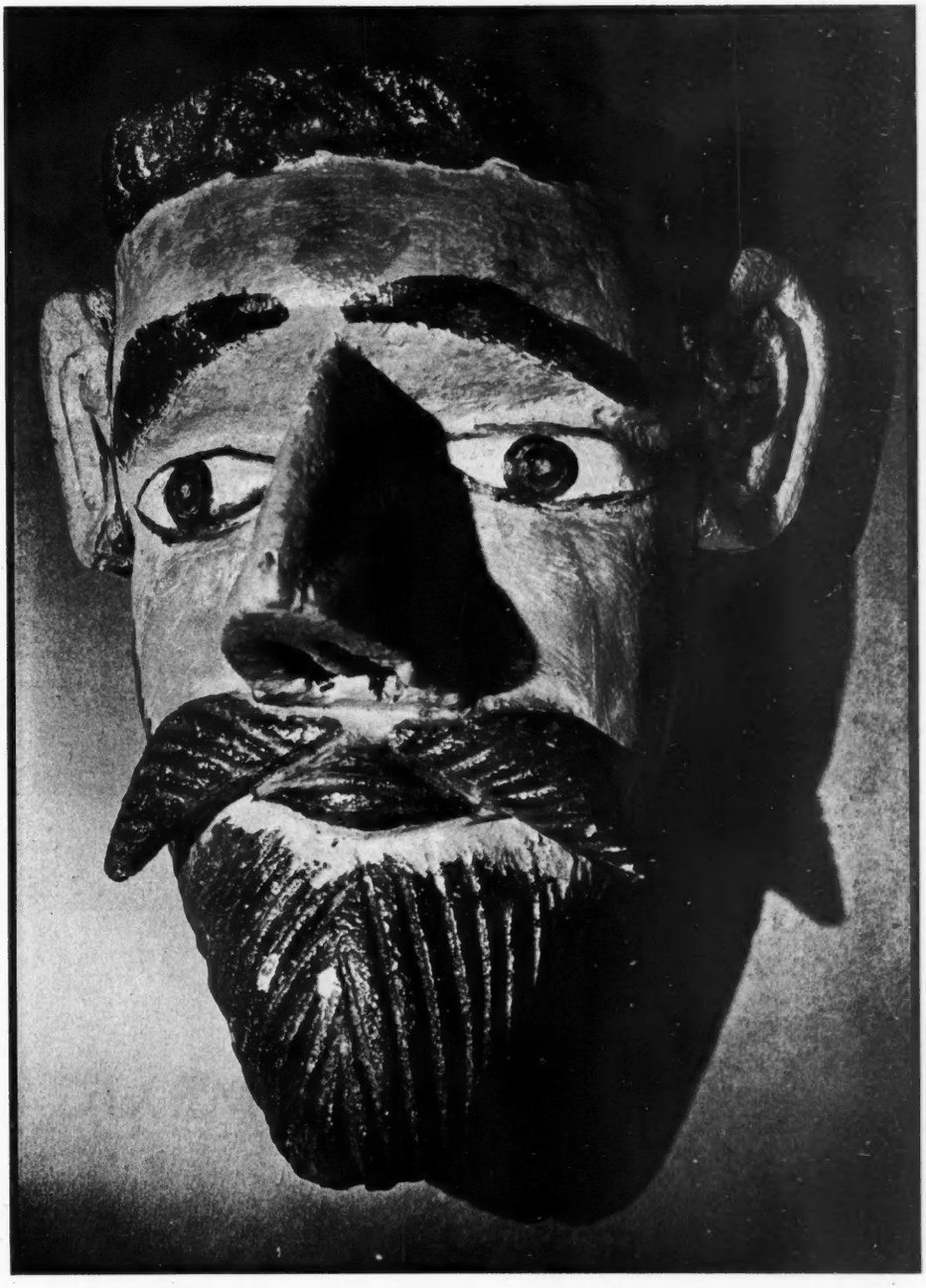
WOOD BLOCK PRINTS ■ ■ ■

BY JEAN CHARLOT

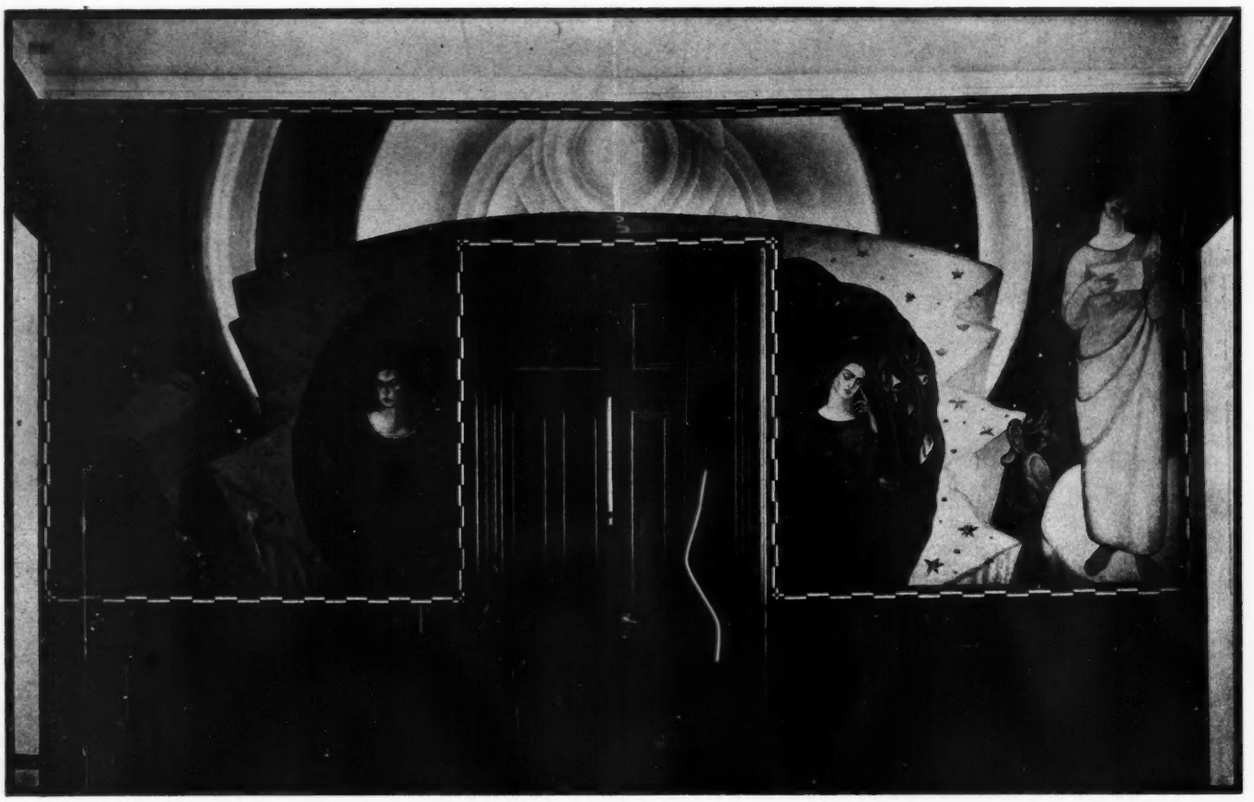
Jean Charlot of French and Mexican ancestry is essentially a painter who has turned to Mexico with his inherent desire for clarity, simplification and order where he has found in the ancient Mayan and Aztec arts as well as in the slow concise movements of the Indian peasant the influences which are expressed in his fine wood block prints

A MASK

A striking photograph
taken by Sherril Schell



This wooden mask of a Spanish conquistadore is from the State of Jalisco and is but one of a type of allegorical character which has been used in the Mexican fetes



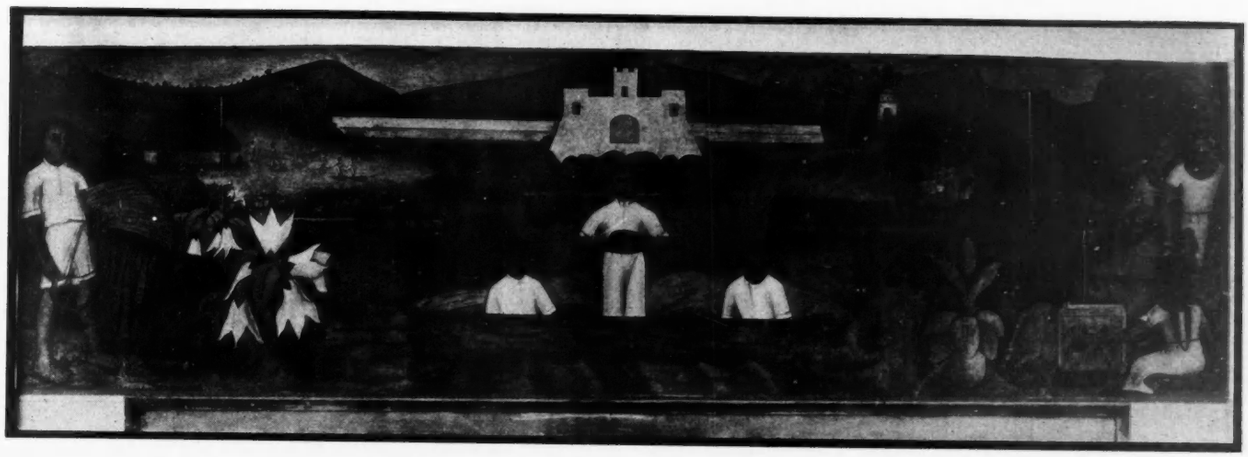
Mural by Montenegro in which the simplicity of composition is marked

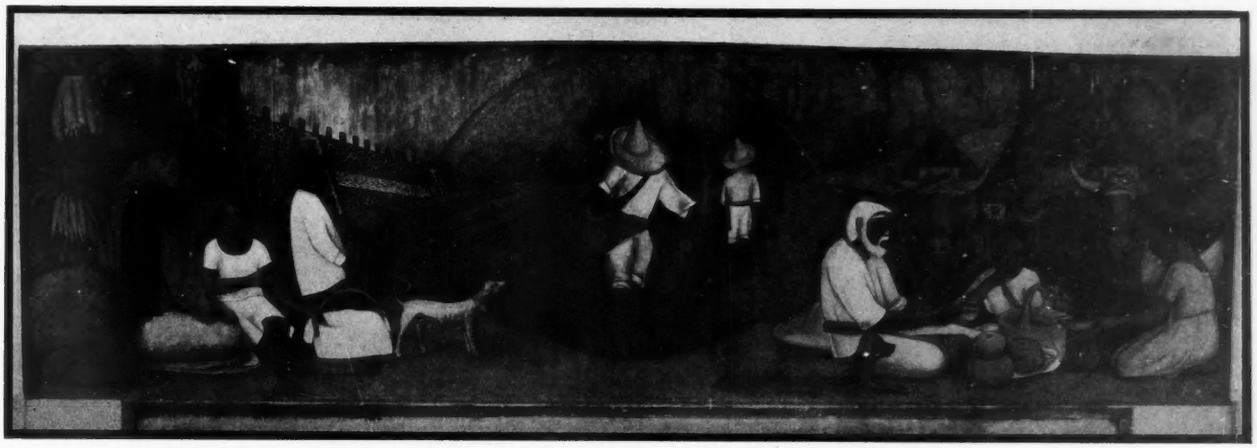
This wooden mask below has a movable mouth and is in the present exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum

MEXICAN ARTISTS

■ Racially few Mexican artists are pure Indian for most of them have had study in Europe.. Art for art's sake and pure painting as such have no place in Mexico. Drawing and painting became the language adapted for the teaching of all subjects. The expression of a religious and political tradition in art is the living breath of the land and it tastes of the soil whatever the form of that period and locality.

There is little doubt that the future students of art history will look back upon Mexico as a place where the various arts — architecture, mural painting, illustration and designing of beautiful accessories — have all been blended into a unified whole which has a new significance and perhaps more real than other better known centers of art on the European continent. Few countries of its size can boast of a greater interest in a general relation of the arts to life. Certainly America has something to learn from the Mexican designers and each year of late has seen here a growing interest in the young creative genius of Mexico.





MURALS BY PACHECO

In the beautiful Open Air School for Indian Children at Balbuena

■ What the decorative arts mean in the lives of the Mexicans is well illustrated by this enchanting little school for Indian children the decorations for which the youthful Maximo Pacheco was responsible, decorating not only the interior walls, but occasionally the exterior as well. His style is exciting in its vital decorative qualities while the subject matter is that which is familiar to the youth of Mexico. The whole is conceived in a masterful way by this boy artist. He began as an apprentice to Revueltas, who in turn later gave him instructions. His twentieth year found him with a successful exhibition of his work in Mexico City and the commission from the government to decorate the school at Balbuena. In other schools the pupils themselves have made their own murals in their own simple primitive manner. What more appropriate method could be found for arriving at a geniune appreciation of art? How much better it is to live with the arts, to partake in them and intregating them with the lives of people rather then to hear about them at lectures.

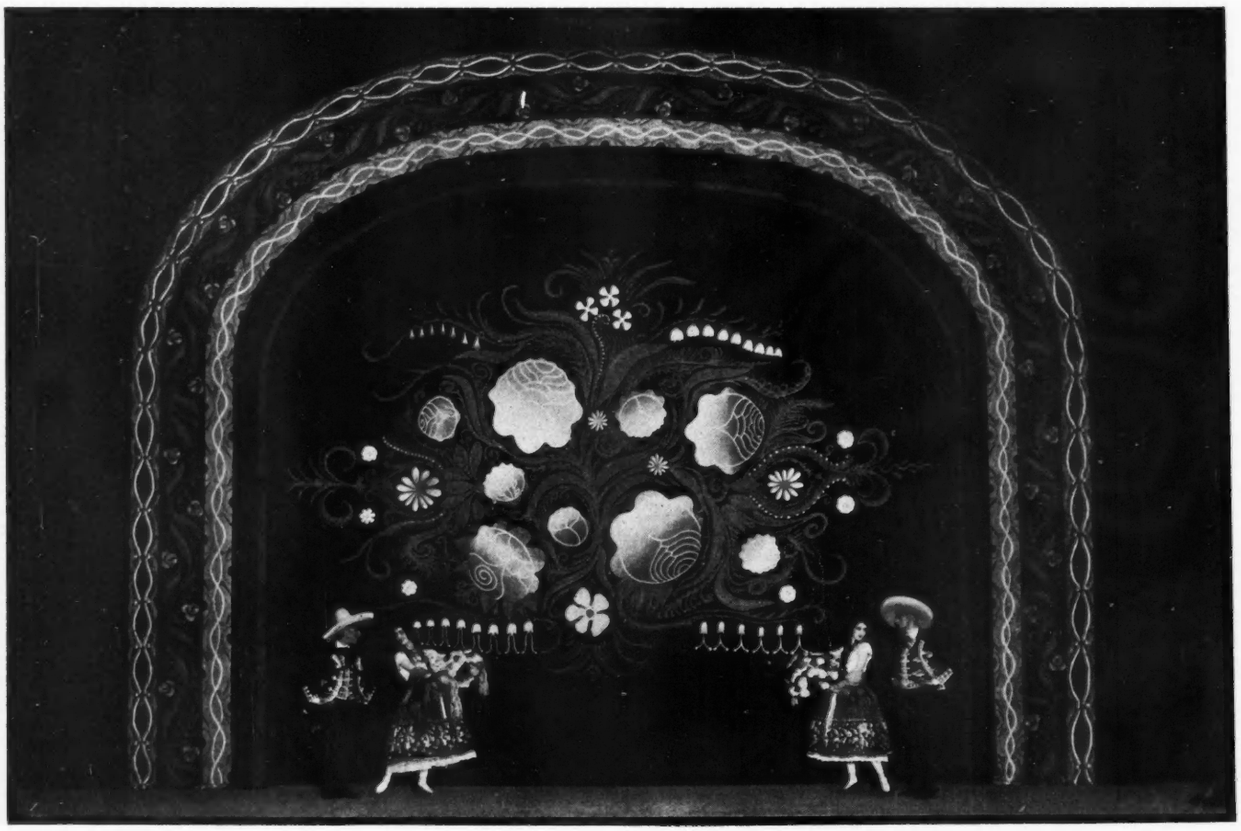
Below is a photograph of Maximo Pacheco who painted the murals above

A SCREEN

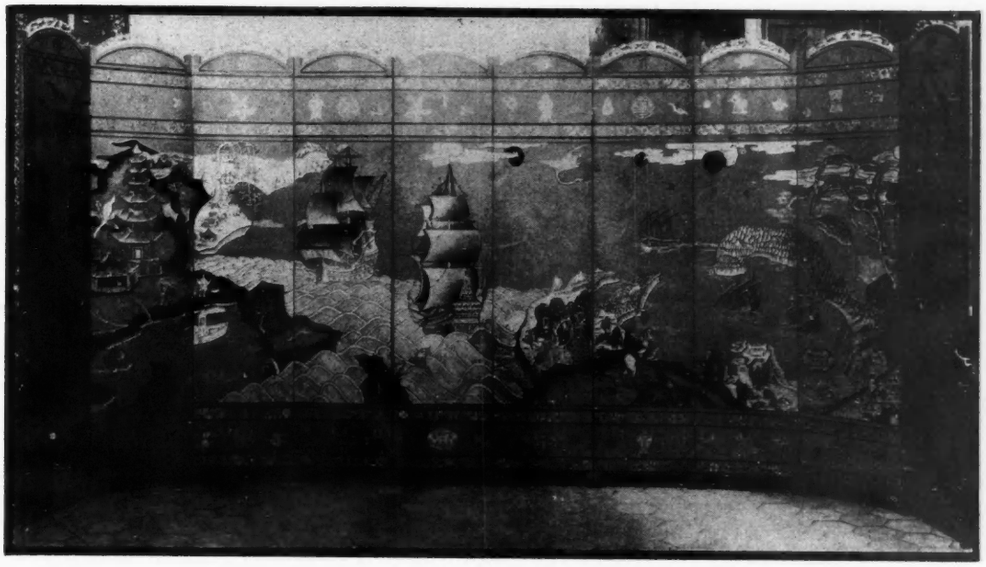
■ Adolfo Best-Maugard, designer, teacher and author, has done much for students of Art through his "New Method of Creative Design" in which book he reduces all decorative design to seven type motifs as a basis for all design. The stage curtain and screen on this page were made in this new method and with what distinctive result. The flower group below suggests the type of design used on the old lacquer bowls such as are illustrated on page 136. Hardly could not imagine a more appropriately conceived or exquisitely executed curtain for the dance or theatre.

A STAGE CURTAIN

For a Pavlowa Ballet designed by Adolfo Best - Maugard



THE CHINESE MOOD IN MEXICO

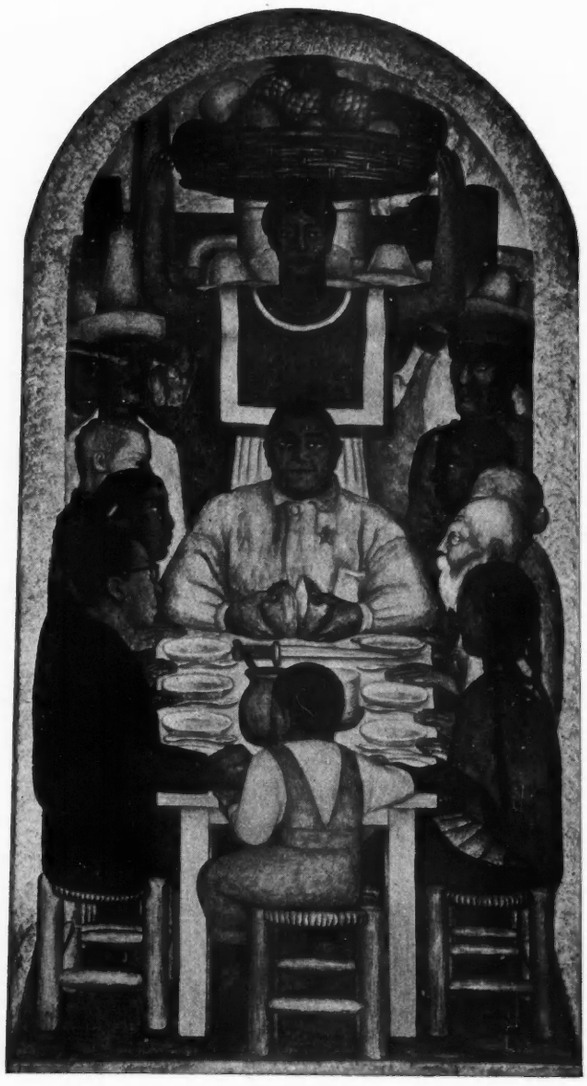


The decoration by Montenegro recently done on a Seventeenth Century screen illustrated above shows the Chinese crossing the Pacific, landing at the Port of Acapulca and meeting the conquistadores. The back of the screen is done in scarlet lacquer with a series of medallions depicting the sports of that time. The mingling of the Chinese and Indian workmen as they crossed to Vera Cruz accounts for such strong Chinese motifs as are seen in the bowl, barrel vases and plate shown on this page from the Metropolitan Museum

DIEGO RIVERA

■ ■ ■ ■

Who has immortalized, synthesized, crystallized the personal and impersonal flame which has been burning in Mexico from the earliest Toltec and Mayan civilization through all the turmoil down to our own time



Two murals by Rivera from the patio walls of the Ministry of Education in Mexico City which are teeming with life. One shows the industrial life of the common people and in the other is shown a philosophical group seated about the table of their master

THE BLACK VIRGIN OF GUADELUPE

BY FERMIN REVUELTAS

Revueltas is not only one of the significant young decorative painters of the new Mexican Renaissance but has had a marked influence through his teaching in the various art schools under the Department of Education

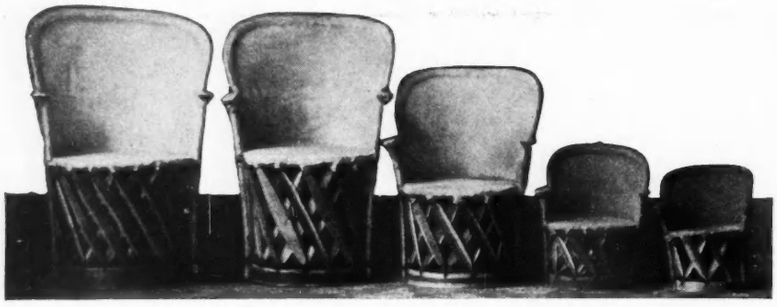
MEXICO AND HER DECORATIVE ARTS

BY FRANCES FLYNN PAINE

Photographs for this and other articles by courtesy of Paine Mexican Arts

■ Mexican character is something of a paradox, in it are blended the religious, the dramatic, the naive, the sophisticated. Yet that which stirs it to expression is life. There is no striving after effects for the Mexican artist. In stone or clay, on tile or canvas, he expresses the thing he knows and worships—the same thing his ancestors knew, loved, and expressed before him. Therefore, his art is simple, direct, natural, comprehensible; very old yet very modern. This is enough to account for its scope. They are born artists. Nine out of ten of Mexico's sons and daughters are not only born artists but artists by choice. In reality they are forced into revolution by economic and political conditions over which as individuals they have no control; left to their own desires each would rather spend his time in the peaceful pursuits of his inherited calling as potter, glass blower, lithographer, textile maker, than in squabbling with his kind. But in Mexico one cannot live by art alone. One must have bread.

What started as a cultural movement in organizing and exhibiting Mexican Arts in America is becoming a practical enterprise and is affording the artists and craftsmen of Mexico an outlet for their remarkably diversified talents. We of America are blind if we refuse to see our good fortune in being in close proximity to a group who can create such exquisite utilitarian things suited to our modern needs —articles every bit as lovely as anything created by the ancients; we are foolish if we ignore our opportunities to tap this rich source of creative art inspiration. We must guard against allowing American commercialism to destroy this. The tendency is for certain persons, seeing a charming bit of handicraft to recognize its commercial value and to bend all efforts towards inducing its Indian creator to reproduce that particular ware by the dozens. Unwittingly that Indian is made to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage. The Mexican creates a certain thing in a certain mood and puts his best into the creation. Temperamentally he is not suited to follow the "mass production" idea, and when forced to, his work suffers. He must go on creating



These modern chairs are exact reproductions of old Mexican furniture

A pleasing table which goes with the chairs above is also made of pigskin and wood

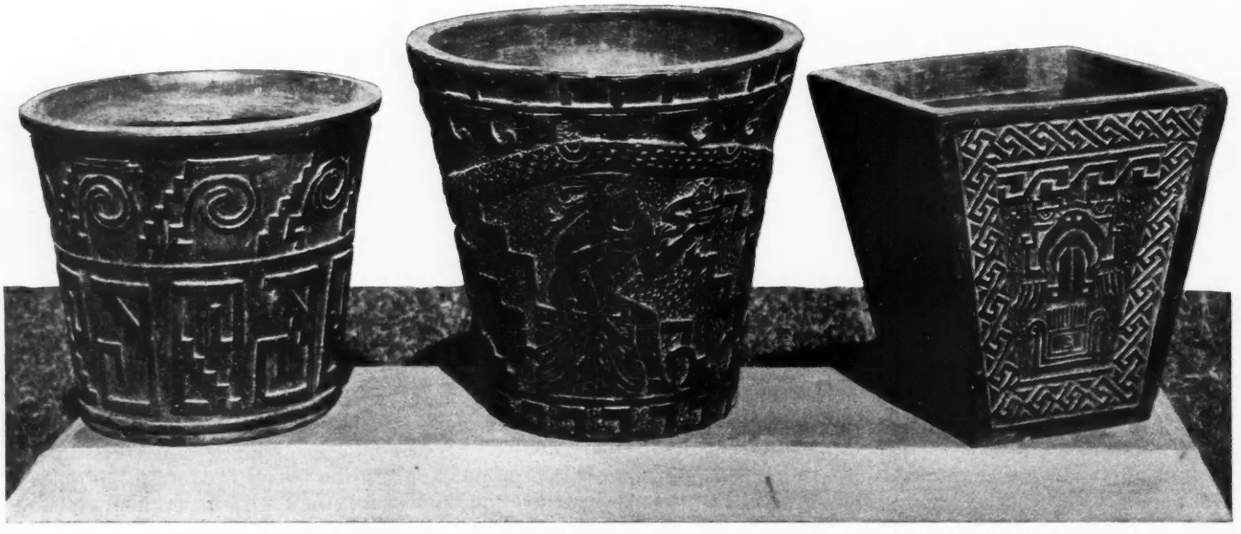
in his own way and his own good time to produce his best.

Precision may be the essence of mechanical production, but this is not true of the Arts. After the briefest study of Mexican wares, even the layman must agree with the expert that any effort to limit that individuality now so evident in every bit of handicraft from the most simple to the most ornate would be a pity. As a matter of fact, we are inclined to make the statement stronger and declare, "That attacking this genius at its source is nothing less than a crime." Before becoming familiar with this art, one naturally has a hazy suspicion that color runs rampant in Mexico, he visions much of it as garish and bizarre. This is a mistake. Color is rampant, surely, but rich color, warm and alluring, color toned and keyed to pleasant harmony,—at once primitive yet in a certain sense sophisticated.

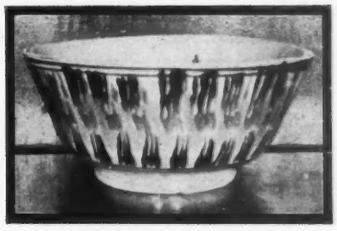
Hand molded and unglazed, created for every conceivable purpose, primitive pottery is made in districts where clay is cream, or white, pink, soft brown or black. All these hues are restfully pleasing. As is appropriate this pottery is distinguished for its simplicity of design and perfection of form. We learn that native craftsmen rarely think of producing an object for decorative use only, that every article has a practical mission in life. In certain cases the Indian artists are more decorative minded and cover surfaces with intricate designs perfectly modulated. The colors they use are soft and harmoniously blended, with surfaces unglazed and lightly fired, with a delightful effect.

The sympathy between the work of the semi-primitive Mexican artists and the moderns is so marked that it seems to prove that the latter return to primitive sources for

A group of garden pottery which though it is made commercially today reproduces the spirit of Mayan Art



Lacquer bowl of the modern type and reflecting the old art learned from the Chinese



The startling bowl and the arrangement of highly colored decorative fruit are significant of Mexico today

their exotic creations in which motifs of water, trees and beasts of the jungle mingle. In Mexico there are many artists who carry on the methods introduced by the Spanish colonials. The latter were sensitive to every movement. By no means a negligible quantity is the marked influence that the Chinese have had on the decorative arts of Mexico —not only the ancient but the modern.

Pottery, glass, textiles, jewelry, silverware and tortoise shell, leather, tiles, painting and lithographs, lacquer, and carved furniture—in fact all things with which art has been concerned from the Thirteenth Century to the present time, every artistic detail in the grand mode of living or in use in the simpler colonial existence is represented in the native handicrafts even of today. Church and civic holidays bring to the Puestos or street stands a bewildering array of native arts.

The pottery fruits are some of the decorative things found in this country of delightful surprises; they are beautifully and brightly colored. They are also made by hand. Strung up about a room in a decorative way, much as strings of garlic, corn, etc., are seen in some of our rural homes.

The *molcajete* or stone mortar is still used for grinding the herbs for sauces used in the delicious Mexican cuisine. From a plastic standpoint they are usually superb sculpture and hand hewn from *malpais*, a black porous lava rock. Each mood and tense is present to a profound degree in Mexican art, the chief characteristic of which is its versatility. Undeniably a great part of it is the work of genius. All is fine.

A characteristic arrangement of contemporary ceramics is shown below in which a strong feeling of the Spanish Talavera is prevalent

Mayan jades from the Third to Fifth Centuries are reproduced by courtesy of the Peabody Museum At the left are two braziers

MAYAN ARTS

BY LOWELL HOUSER

■ The hieroglyphic writing of the Mayas carved in low stone relief dates from the First Century, B. C. to the Fifth Century, A. D. Though much of the meaning has been lost the beauty of the glyphs as pure abstract design remains. A casual surveyor would find in their sinuous line a quality to link them with the ancient Chinese. It is more probably that the important place of the snake in the Maya pantheon accounts for the serpentine flowing of line and tapering masses, archeological science being more ready to acknowledge for the Mayas an all-American origin.

Motifs from Mayan Decoration by Jean Charlot

Three jars from the State of Guerrero and a plate from Dolores Hidalgo all of which are very primitive, being fired in an open fire and decorated with earth color

THE MEXICAN EXHIBITION

Recently opened at the Metropolitan Museum

BY RENE D'HARNONCOURT

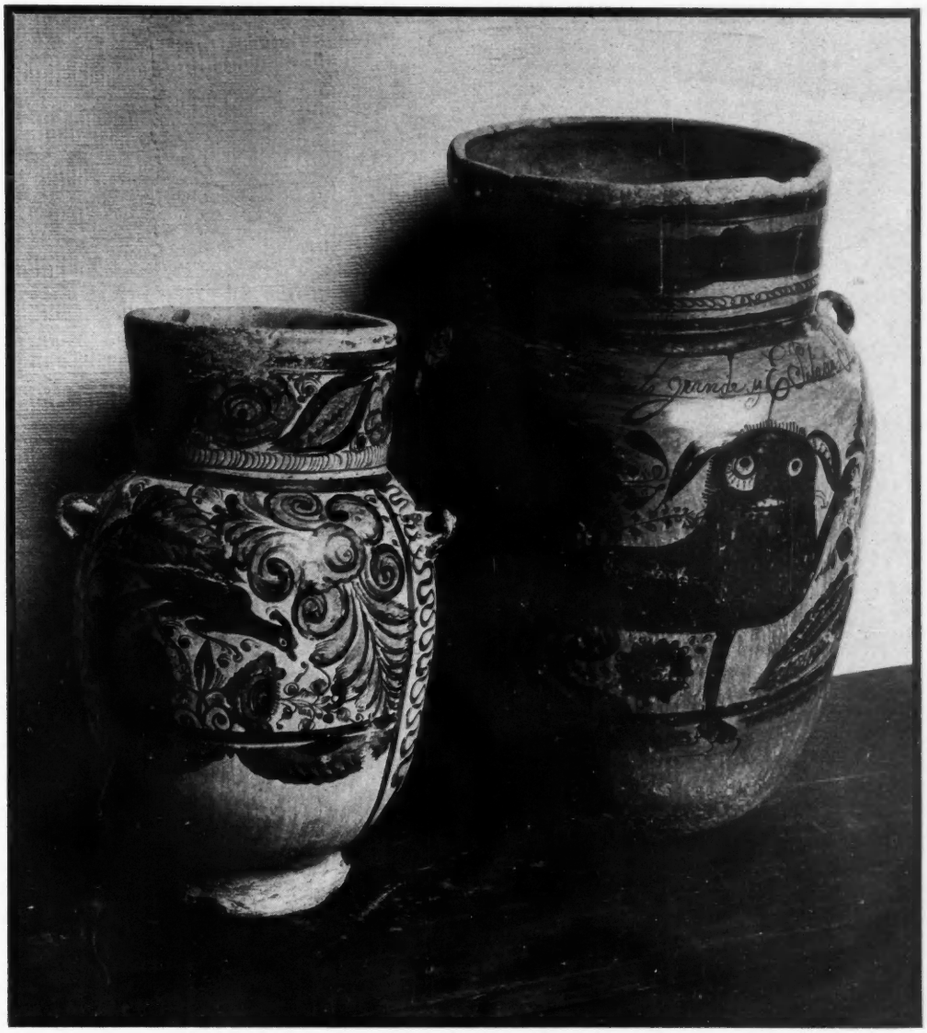
■ The Mexican Exposition of the American Federation of Arts which will tour the country during the winter and summer of 1930-31 going to New York, Boston, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Washingon, Milwaukee, Louisville and San Antonio is not merely a collection of the fine and applied arts of Mexico. It is an illustration of the development of Mexican culture from the time of the invasion of the Spaniards to the present. The unconscious resistance to the imposition of a foreign culture throughout the colonial period as well as during the first century of political independence is clearly shown in the objects made in the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. When Mexico gained her political independence she threw off the yoke of Spanish cultural domination but instead of turning to her own well developed tradition she took France as the model in cultural matters. Since the social revolution of 1910 there has been a determined and successful movement for true Mexican expression that is so well shown in the fine arts of the last two decades. This modern self-conscious expression of the people is a logical result of Mexico's recently achieved cultural freedom from foreign tradition and influence.

The scope of the plastic arts of Mexico has always been equal to that of any other country and the great variety in each branch has resulted in a large, interesting and still indefinitely known expression of the people. The commercial value of the handicraft has always been very low, therefore the products have not suffered in artistic value through any desire to please the purchaser. The ruling classes of Mexico up to the present have not cared to use the native products which found their purchasers among the poorer people of the villages. Therefore since the buyer and maker were of the same class and had the same beliefs and interests the products remained distinctly Mexican in character.

The designs and forms of Mexican art are numerous and many of them are reminiscent of the forms in the arts of other ages and countries. It is possible to see similarities between the Mexican work and that of Crete, Egypt and the Orient. This is not unusual since there are form elements that are similar in the popular arts of all countries. Whatever the native Mexican workman has borrowed from foreign designs it is obvious that he has given his own

Old Guanajuato faience showing Indian influence and designs

A water jug and tomale jar from Tonala Jalisco

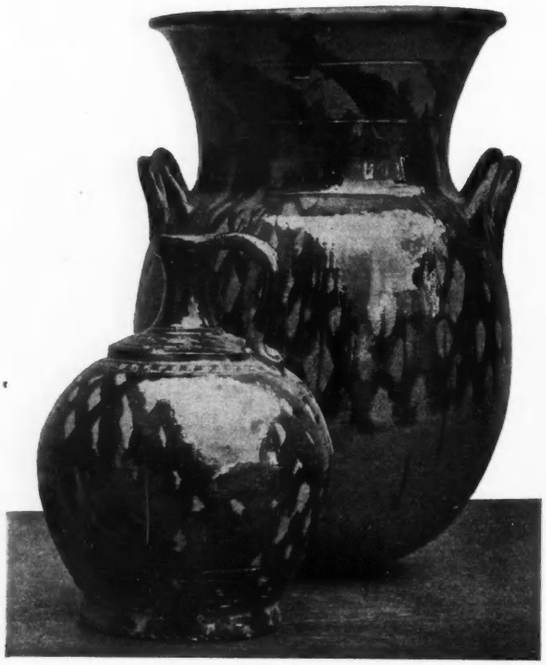


individual conception and execution to his work. Pottery has always been the most important craft work of the native Mexican. The ware that we find today shows many stages of development from the primitive plate from Guanajuato that is baked in an open fire to the "Talavera" of Puebla which has only recently admitted Indian designs and still is the best commercial pottery of Mexico. The oldest faience that shows distinct Indian designs comes from the state of Guanajuato. In the state of Oaxaca we find pottery in design and technique the same as it was before the conquest as well as the highly glazed and refined modern ware. The jars and plates that are made by the natives for ordinary use often show a classic form and dignity and an individual design.

This plate and water cooler and atole jar from Tonala Jalisco are ordinary everyday dishes used by the Indians

Ceremonial masks are used throughout rural Mexico in dances. These masks often had their origin in the passion plays and festivals of the Catholic church but they have now lost their identity and serve only to satisfy the dancer's sense of the dramatic. These masks are symbols of deities, man and beast. The virile power and clear form of these grotesquely sculptured head and face images link them directly to the great sculpture of the ancient Indian civilizations. The masks are generally carved in the soft, light, porous tropical wood known as "colorin" although they may be made of baked clay, skins, leather or papier-machè. Their coloring is as fantastic and unusual as the sculpture and is further proof of the unfailing individuality in Mexican artistic expression.

The colorful and endless variety of the toys made in Mexico reveals the native psychology and sense of humor



The water jug and tomale jar at the right are examples of light brown pottery glazed with black which are used by the natives and come from Barrio de la Luz, Puebla

In the lacquer work shown above the big brightly colored bowl is from Uruapuan, Michoacan, the design being painted with lacquer on a lacqured surface. The box and jicara or gourd-bowl and little birds are from Olinala, Guerrero, the effect on the box having been made by covering the surface with two coats of different colored lacquers and cutting away the design

The pale green blown glass bottle and pitcher made in the glass factory of the Avalos Brothers in Mexico City

in a convincing and beautiful manner. The toys carved of wood, baked in clay, made of wax and cloth and an endless variety of materials from sugar to iron never fail to carry that richness in color and form that is peculiar to Mexico. There is often a pretext made to make the toys useful by placing a slit in the side of a vigorously colored animal—often the horned lion of Mexico's toyland—but the slit is invariably too small for the large Mexican coins and the purchaser knows that the bank is really meant to be a beautiful ornament.

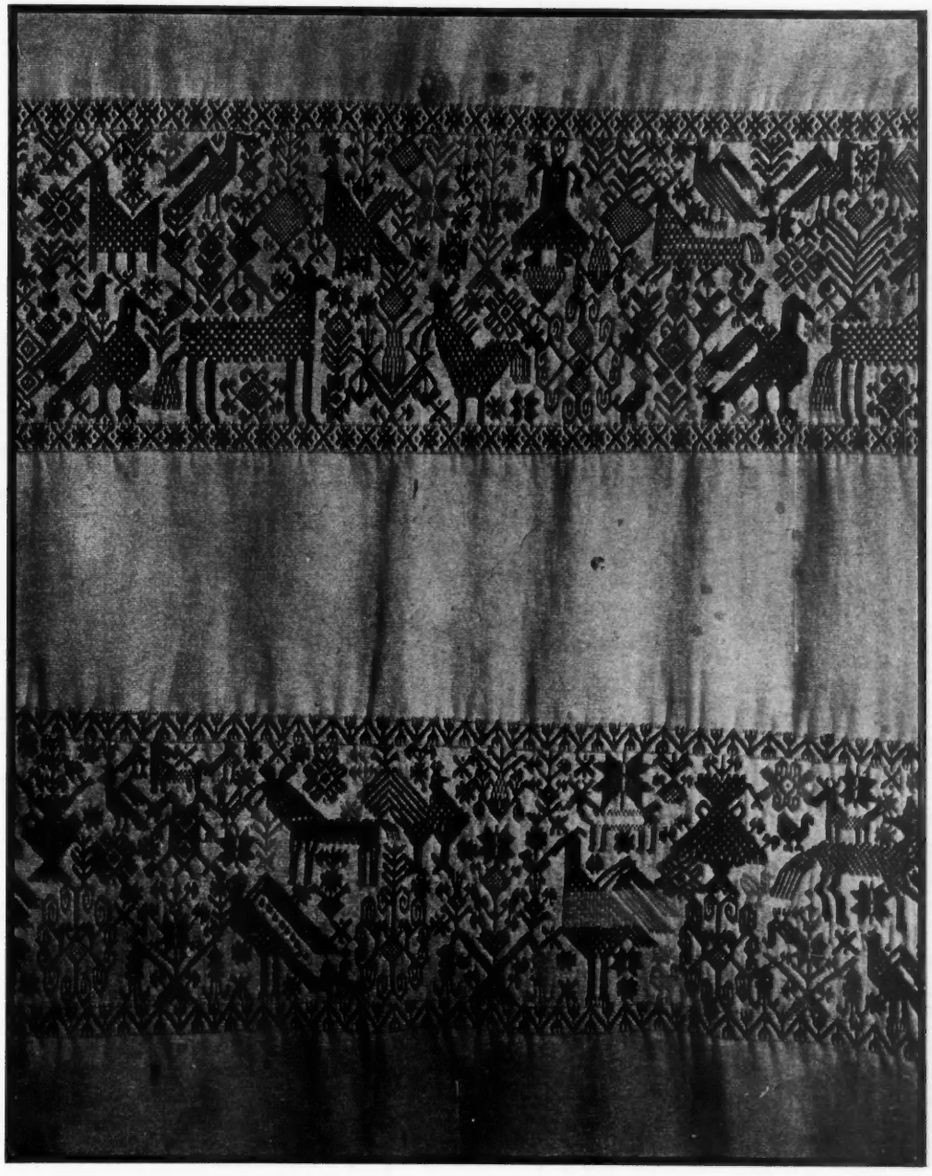
Weaving is another of the popular arts of Mexico that has retained its Indian character throughout the past four hundred years. Blankets, shawls and sashes that are a part of the everyday dress of the native are still made in the rich colors and beautiful patterns that were used in pre-conquest days. Blankets from centers where weaving has been the main industry for centuries still have their easily recognized patterns and weaves.

Boxes and bowls of wood and the jicaras (gourd bowls), gourd birds and fish that are decorated in lacquer are an important industry in the states of Guerrero and Michoacan. The lacquer decoration from Olinala, Guerrero is put on by covering the object with two coats of lacquer of contrasting colors and then cutting the design in order to show the under color. The work is done entirely by hand with lacquers that the Indians prepare themselves. The birds and fish that are made by using gourds as the bodies have that simplicity of form and richness of color that is used so much in modern objects of home decoration. These vary in size and are sometimes made by combining several pieces of gourd to form the tails and wings of the birds. The rich coloring and variety of design in these lacquered objects which is so Mexican in character is easily distinguished from the lacquer work of other countries. The motifs of the designs represent people, animals and plants and are often very intricate in drawing. The exquisite

AN AGOTE

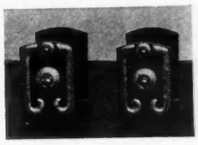
■ ■ ■

from San Mateo
Atarascillo State
of Mexico



An agote which is used as a carry-all for the natives is a square of cloth made of cactus fiber and decorated with woven wool or cotton stripes as shown in the illustration

Spurs and stirrups of steel inlaid with silver from Amoroc State of Puebla



color and the rhythmic designs place this art among the most important of the popular arts of Mexico.

There is at present a fully developed and extremely important Renaissance of the fine arts in Mexico. The frescos on the walls of the public buildings which depict in subject matter the life and spirit of the Mexican people and express in form and technique the great talent of her modern painters makes Mexico one of the most important centers of the contemporary art world. There is a striking similarity between the bold form and color harmonies of the modern mural decoration and the classic sculpture found on the temples of old Indian civilizations and the primitive picture manuscripts of the pre-conquest period. The vigor and beauty of the self-conscious expression of the contemporary Mexican artist is proof that he has been able to keep his own tradition and integrity in spite of foreign rules and influences which he has experienced.

COLHUATZINCO

CUAUTITLAN

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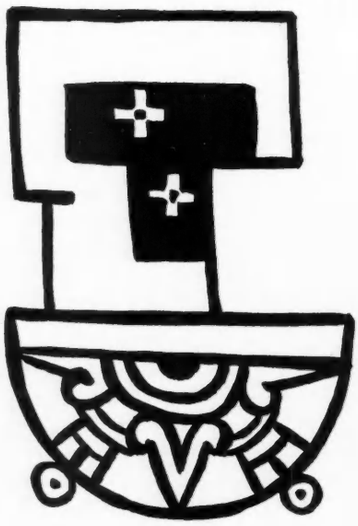

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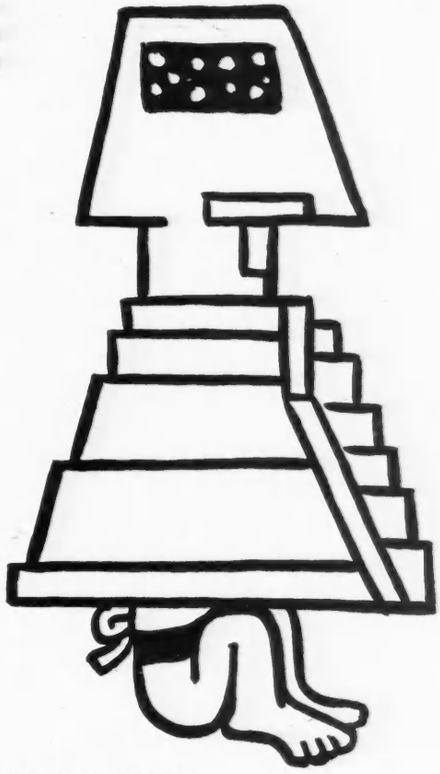
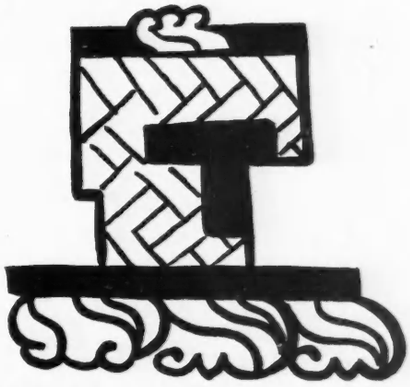


TEOCALTZINCO

The Aztec influence on Mexican Art of all periods even to the present time has always been of great interest to the student



TEPETLACALCO

AZTEC MOTIFS

■ ■ ■ ■

BY JEAN CHARLOT

TEPEPULAN

■ The Aztec civilization flourished from the Seventeenth Century to its destruction by the Spanish conquistadores. The examples of picture writing here shown are all names of Aztec towns. Though these glyphs can still be deciphered they are interesting also as pure designs. In contrast with the Maya glyphs, the Aztecs emphasized the value of straight lines, verticals and horizontals, thus linking their art to our modern cubistic aesthetics. Their art, however, never ceased to be representional. Here can be recognized, put to decorative use, a house, a temple, a tree with a mask hanging freely from it, and a mosquito.

Drawing depicting a hunting scene on ancient vase now in Carnegie Institute

MEXICAN CRAFTS

CERAMICS ■ ■ ■

BY EVA BROOKS DONLY

■ Because Mexican pottery is an art and has been subject to such diversity of rich influences such as Spanish, Moorish, Indian and Chinese it is so broad in its scope that a point of attack is difficult. At present, however, the craft is almost, if not entirely, in the hands of the native Indian who is a most ingenious and creative artist when left to his own devices.

He has a way of utilizing what nature has provided for him. He can improvise something out of what would seem to us to be really nothing. If he lacks needle and thread, he will cut off the sharp pointed spine from a century plant, allowing a long thread of the strong fibre to come away with it. The roots of wild grasses supply him with a brush for his hair and so on ad infinitum. So with his pottery, he uses whatever clay happens to be nearest his hand. He only makes what he has use for: receptacles for cooking; vessels to hold water or to transport it from fountain or spring; cooking vessels with round bottoms, to adjust themselves to the hot charcoal; water jars that can be carried easily on the head, with handles suitably placed for dipping into the fountain; narrow necked cups with handles for the native beverage, pulque. The shapes and methods they use, are matters of inheritance, handed down from generation to generation.

Certain localities naturally excel more than others in the quality of their wares as well as in popular appreciation. Puebla, Guadalajara, Oaxaca, Jalapa, Guanajuato, Tehuantepec, Uruapam, and Saltillo are great centers for all kinds of craftsmanship. A lot of Mexican Pottery spread out in the sun on a bright serape (blanket) is irresistible and one buys it whether one needs it or not. Everybody in Mexico collects it, from the highest to the lowest in the land and

milady will have a collection of the tiny specimens in her salòn cabinet while the greatest treasure of the humblest Indita is her shelf of small pottery, toys in reality. Everybody falls for it in one way or another, the foreign resident or the casual tourist.

On the occasions of big religious feasts and special Saints' Days, the plazas are choked with booths exhibiting the wares from the various famous districts already mentioned, while crowds surge continuously about them, haggling, handling, purchasing and perchance if opportunity offers, filching.

Majolica is made in a number of places, Oaxaca, Guanajuato, Tezcoco, etc., but the heart of the industry is in Puebla, the City of the Angels, the city of a hundred churches, having been produced there in great numbers under the jurisdiction of the Spanish Padres while the Indians proved themselves apt pupils. The Padres needed it for the adornment of the marvelous churches that they had under construction. Talavera tiles in blue and orange covered the great domes, the altars, the fountains, and sometimes even whole buildings were covered with them.

The Spanish influence which naturally impressed itself upon the pottery of Mexico by workmen from Talavera is illustrated in the variety of pieces on this page, which are decorated in raised blue. The lower one on the opposite page was a polychrome decoration in red, yellow, green and brown. This pottery is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art

They were also utilized for friezes, panels, facades, braziers and floors.

Utensils, fonts, basins, candle-sticks, lavatories, jars, plates, vessels, vases of all kinds and shapes were made in this ware. After the dispossession of the Church by Juarez, the manufacture of it was abandoned. Many of the secrets for making it have been lost, especially the secret of the dark blue enamel (often used in relief), with which it was almost invariably decorated and sometimes combined with orange. An ambitious foreigner, resident in Puebla, endeavored, within recent years, to revive the old art but with indifferent success. He arrived at a very good dark blue and made some effective things but they were not the same as the old ware. Even that effort has fallen by the wayside.

POTTERS OF SAN ANTONE

In the little village of San Antone across the barranca from Cuernavaca in the State of Morelos, was produced this most unique pottery shown on this page.

From their own native red brick, a coarse and heavy medium clay, they were able to produce jars and vessels of a surprising grace of line, and a distinction of form often lacking in pottery made from much finer clays.

Vessels for ordinary use have very little attention paid to their decoration—some little pattern might be scratched on or a thumb-nail indented border might suffice. Large, choice water-jars or filters show a much more complicated treatment, in this case an inlay of broken crockery pounded into bits of a more or less uniform size, which were then pressed into the moist clay to form borders or medallions or other decorative motifs.

Frequently the front of some especial vessels are almost covered with an elaborate design of this inlaid crockery, resulting in something precious, almost jewel-like in effect.

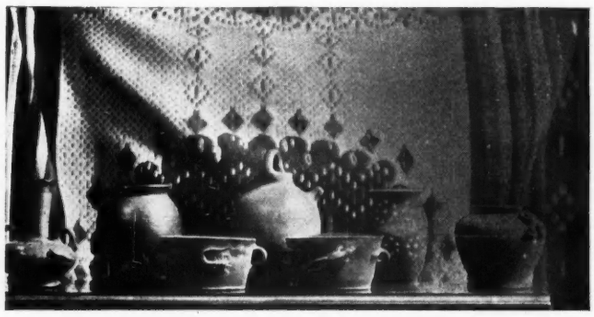
The three pieces at the back in upper left illustration are the more typical, the third, at the right, if you look closely enough, shows a simple pattern of the crockery inlay. The pieces in the front row are the result of foreign interference and are not as artistic, being made at the instigation of an Englishwoman with the object of appealing to the taste of the tourists who flocked to her curio-shop in Cuernavaca.

The lizard and scorpion motifs are equally suggestive of the hot-country, but the lizard is particularly applicable to San Antone, indeed is one of its greatest assets, because, in some long-gone prehistoric noon-day, an Aztec forbear dwelling in his hut under the guava trees, amused himself by hewing out from an outcropping boulder, a huge lizard apparently sunning himself thereon. It is roughly hewn truly, but full of vigor and palpitating with life.

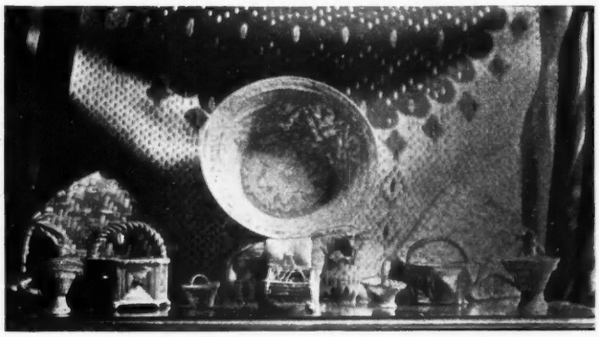
The primitive method utilized by the San Antone potters for baking their coarse wares may be suggestive for potters who do not wish to build a regular kiln. When the pottery is sufficiently dried by the sun it is arranged in a heap on the hillside, by the aid of wild dried grasses over which a covering is made which when lighted creates a dense, slow smudge. Very large vessels were done in this way.

TEXTILES

Basketry and textile weaving have been a common art inheritance of all Indians and the Indians of Old Mexico are no exception to this rule. Their crafts are as varied as the

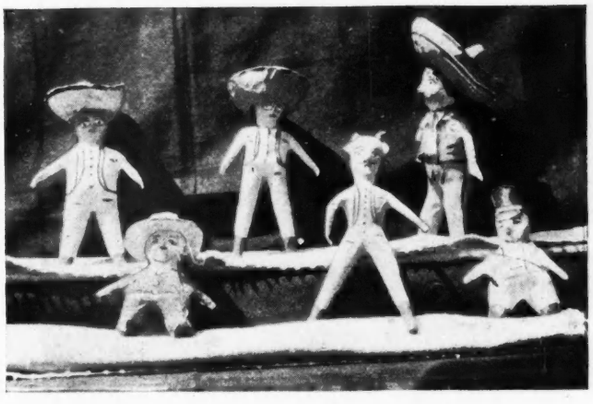


A group of pottery from San Antone showing the typical lizard motifs used in decoration



The two serapes in the above illustrations show the beauty of the Mexican textile arts

A bag woven on a small hand loom by one of the most primitive tribes in the State of Mexico village of Ixmiquilpam. It is in the exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum



In these toys action and expression are achieved by the Mexicans with a few apparently haphazard stitches

The naive though sculpturesque dolls now in the Metropolitan Museum are most highly colored and come from Erongaricuaro, Michoca

numerous tribes, each tribe having its own traditional patterns, colors and secret dyes, sacred to the tribe. It is almost impossible to buy a piece of hand-woven cloth from an Indian woman for no one outside the tribe is allowed to use it. That would be desecration and sacrilege.

The typical Mexican Indian wears a shirt and pantaloons of white cotton; his mop of bristly black hair is protected from the burning rays of a tropical sun by a huge straw or palm *sombrero*, woven steeply conical in crown and widely spreading of brim. On a cold morning, he thrusts his head through his gaily colored *serape* or blanket, letting it fall picturesquely about his ankles, while at other times, it is neatly folded lengthwise and carelessly, but gracefully, flung over his left shoulder, where it remains without apparent effort on his part. His *serape* is part and parcel of him; he would not consider himself properly dressed without it. The women wear no hats; but they would "feel shame" were they to appear on the streets without their long, scarf-like, fringed *rebozos* draped about their heads and shoulders.

The weaving of *serapes* and *rebozos* is one of the most important industries of the country and has been from time immemorial. They are woven on hand looms of the Jacguard type, the *serapes* from Saltillo being the most sought after and valuable. Those in the illustration came from the State of Oaxaca, a great workshop for handicrafts of every description and whose textiles are second only to those from Saltillo. Fine weaving is done at Texcoco, only a short distance from Mexico City, but many of the patterns and dyes have deteriorated through contact with the foreigner and there has been a consequent loss in artistry.

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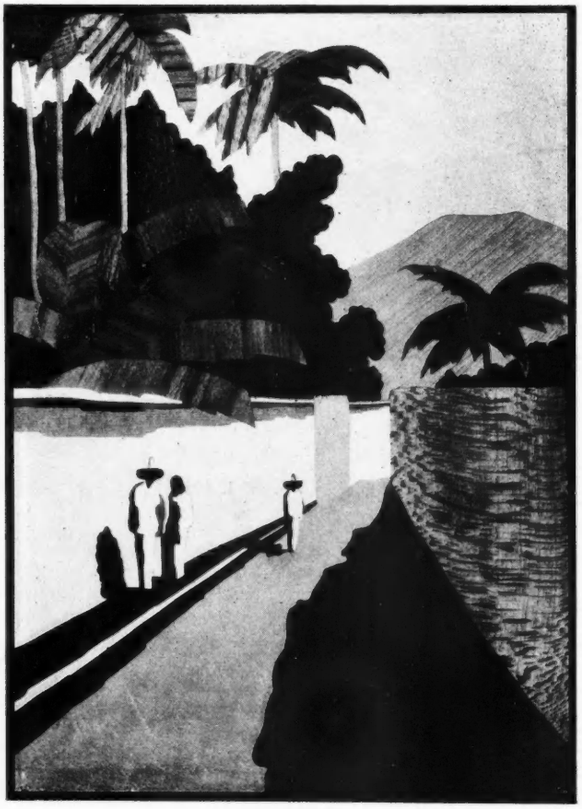
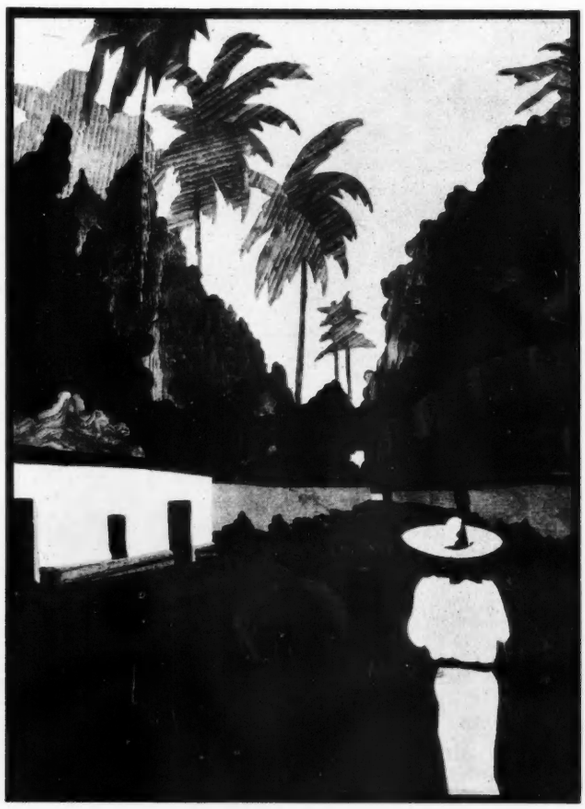
TOYS

In Mexico, nothing is lost or allowed to go to waste. Not a piece of printed calico, a shred of lace, a bird's feather, a tiny twig, a bit of wire or a scrap of paper, goes begging. All is grist to the mill of the toy maker. Some of it will reappear in the shape of fantastic effigies, perhaps of Judas, to be strung up and burned on the morning of the Saturday of Glory, dancing and dangling and spurting smoke and flame, caused by the explosion of powder secreted in the entrails of his demoniac anatomy. Rag dolls, of varying degrees of size and style, are manufactured from these cast off scraps of material, each one exhibiting, in some mysterious way, the subtle psychology of the Mexican temperament—form, expression, action, all obtained by a few, apparently haphazard, stitches with a needle and thread in the hands of a Mexican Indian woman.

The festivals of the church are the great incentive to artistic production, everything centering around the particular religious idea of the event being celebrated. Each holy day produces a different manifestation. On All Saints' and All Souls' Days, figurines, made from spun sugar, depicting skulls, crossbones and suchlike lugubrious objects, predominate. Easter and Christmas are the great harvest times for the craftsmen. The latter brings the mangers, the three kings with gilt paper crowns and sceptres and other rich and gaudy bedizenment, countless animals natural as life, shepherds and shepherdesses with crooks and sheep, Josephs and Marys and the little *Cristos;* traditional, primitive, emblematic manifestations of the simple faith of a simple artistic people.

WOOD INLAY

Here is another one of the amazing crafts of the Mexican Indian in which he achieves startling compositions with bold light and dark arrangements and pleasing textural qualities. These inlaid wood panels must suggest to our designers an eminently suitable method of securing mural effects quite in keeping with modern American interiors